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Senate

The Senate met at 9:00 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BRIAN SCHATZ, a Senator from the State of Hawaii.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Lord of all being, energize our Senators today with Your presence. Out of Your infinite wisdom, speak to their finite hearts and guide them on right paths. Out of Your marvelous grace, minister to their common needs. Lord, inspire them to cherish the ethical road that leads to a destination that honors You. Remind them that they may make plans, but Your purposes will prevail. Enable them to sense Your guidance as they grapple with the problems of our time.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BRIAN SCHATZ led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter.

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 21, 2013.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BRIAN SCHATZ, a Senator from the State of Hawaii, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SCHATZ thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

Mr. REID. Mr. President, will the Chair report the business of the day.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2014

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. Con. Res. 8, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 8) setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2014, revising the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal year 2013, and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2015 through 2023.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, as we just heard, the Senate has resumed consideration of the budget debate of S. Con. Res. 8, the budget resolution. We will continue debate during today's session. Senators will be notified when votes are scheduled, of course.

The budget has 34 hours left, and then following that, we will have some votes. It is up to the two managers of this bill if we have votes before the 34 hours expire. These are two experienced Senators and they know how to handle this budget, but it would seem to me that we should move as quickly as we can to debate these issues. I hope Senators come and offer their opinions as to the budget that Chairman MUR-

RAY has brought to the Senate floor. Maybe some people will want to talk about what passed in the House yesterday, the Ryan Republican budget.

Everyone should understand that this time will run out at the latest at 7 p.m. tomorrow night. It seems to me the two managers could reduce that time somewhat. If they don't, it doesn't matter; we will be here until we finish this budget. If we are here all night Friday, we will be in all night Friday. I spoke to Senator MURRAY, and she was willing to be in all night last night; she is willing to be here all night tonight and all night Friday night until we finish this. We are going to move forward and finish this budget.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, three years ago this coming Saturday was a historic time in this country and in the world, actually, because the Affordable Care Act passed. It was a very wintry night when it passed—very cold. It was the greatest single step in generations to help the American people.

This was unique because for the first time—going back to the days of Harry Truman where he talked about a health care bill for the country, to Eisenhower, who talked about a health care bill for this country—we were finally able to accomplish it. We ensured access to quality, affordable health care for every American with ObamaCare, the Affordable Care Act.

Millions and millions of Americans, as we speak, are benefiting from this legislation. Insurance companies can no longer arbitrarily place lifetime caps on insurance policies during someone's care. No longer can they suddenly say: Sorry, you have cancer or had that bad accident, but you reached \$1,000—or whatever limit they set, \$10,000—and you are through. Go get help someplace else because insurance is over. That arbitrary lifetime cap by insurance companies put Americans just a car accident or an illness away from doom.

• This “buller” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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